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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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PROCUREMENT SECTION CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

GOAT BY ANOTHER NAME

USDA Seeks Consumer Comments. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comments on a proposal to allow labeling of goat meat as "mutton" or "chevon"—a Spanish term for goat meat. USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service explains that packers, primarily involved in the slaughter of goats, contend that consumers understand what the proposed names mean. Current Federal meat inspection regulations require the name "goat meat" on labels identifying goat meat and products containing it. Copies of the proposal, published in the Federal Register, March 23, are available from the Issuance Coordination Staff, Standards and Services Division, Consumer and Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. If you would like to comment on the proposal, send two copies of your statement -- by April 22 -- to the Hearing Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. All comments will be available for public review.

WORK-EARN-LEARN

Youth Conservation Corps. USDA's Forest Service will be one of the Federal agencies participating in this summer's Youth Conservation Corps pilot program. About 2,200 young men and women, ages 15-18, from all economic and social backgrounds, will be employed in the first phase of a 3-year pilot program established by Congress and conducted jointly by the Departments of Agriculture and Interior. In a work-earn-learn program, youths will be paid a nominal salary for such conservation work as clearing stream banks, building trails and constructing recreation structures. At the same time they will learn about the meaningful use, management, and protection of the Nation's natural resources. Because of the pilot nature of the program at present, youths participating this summer will be limited to those who live within the boundaries of a public school system selected to recruit and process applicants for a specific YCC Camp. For further information and a list of the camps write to: Director, Manpower and Youth Conservation Programs, Forest Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.



KEEP YOUR BASEMENT DRY

Avoid A Damp Problem. "Dry" holes are the scourge of oil drillers. But when the hole in the ground is your basement, "dry" is best. A dry, bright basement can provide space for handy storage, convenient laundry rooms, and attractive recreation rooms and bedrooms. It can also lengthen the life of your house and furnishings and add greatly to the value of your home. The best way to keep your basement dry is to make it water tight at the beginning, the time of construction. Correcting wet or damp conditions after construction can be done, but often it is difficult and expensive. A recently revised USDA publication, "Making Basements Dry," does give tips on how to improve old basements though most of the 10-page booklet is devoted to prevention through proper construction--selection of building sites, watertight construction, roof water disposal, surface and subsurface drainage, and ways of preventing condensation on new construction. Copies of "Making Basements Dry" (G-115) are available for 10 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

LACE ON A BUDGET

That Sculptured Look. Beautiful, delicate lace, long considered a luxury, may soon be within reach of almost any budget. USDA researchers have developed a process that transforms the most inexpensive - and coarser - cotton lace into a finished product with depth, a "sculptured" look, plus a bonus of stretchability—all at little additional cost. Scientists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service treated cotton lace with a process originally developed to give stretch to woven cotton. They dipped the lace in a solution of sodium hydroxide, a caustic agent, causing the lace fibers to swell and crimp, producing the stretch and sculpturing. The scientists found, too, that the cheapest lace frequently produces the best-looking finished product. Commercial mills are showing interest in the process, so, sculptured cotton lace may soon be on its way to retail stores and consumers.

COOPERATION WITH STATES

Metroforestry Program. In addition to urban forestry research, the Forest Service through its State and Private Forestry division cooperates with State forestry agencies in providing full-time advice and assistance in several major cities. The successful Metroforestry Program in Atlanta, Georgia, is an outstanding example of what can be done in urban forestry. Since 1967, the Georgia Forestry Commission has assigned six of its foresters full-time to the metropolitan Atlanta area where, by the way, one-third of the State's population resides. In addition to the usual requests for forest management advice, the Metroforesters advise shade tree owners on questions of insects and diseases, construction damage to trees, what trees to plant, and similar problems. They work with garden clubs, youth organizations, flower shows, and fairs to promote forestry and tree appreciation to Atlanta's urban residents. Programs such as Metroforestry help solve today's environmental and ecological problems by educating urbanites to know and understand trees and associated plants around them.

APRIL PLENTIFUL FOODS

A Peachy Month. Canned peaches, a headliner on the April Plentiful Foods List, will be featured in grocery stores across the nation this month. Other foods on the April Plentiful List are eggs, canned ripe olives, potatoes, prunes, pork, turkeys, flounder and sole fillets, dried peas, peanuts and peanut products, and canned applesauce. The May Plentifuls will include eggs, potatoes and potato products, canned ripe olives, milk and dairy products, canned cling peaches, and turkeys.

SPRING FOOD PREVIEW

Food prices at the grocery store will rise little this spring. For all of 1971, they may average only 1 or 2 percent above 1970.

Farm prices of food, up slightly last year, are expected to average a little lower in 1971, mainly because of larger supplies of livestock products. This will temper rising "price" of food marketing -- the shipping, processing, packaging, retailing and other steps that ready food for consumers.

Convenience food prices, which closely reflect processing and retailing costs, will move somewhat higher this spring. But, meat, poultry, fruit, and vegetable items will show mixed changes, related more closely to current supplies.

Meat prices during the spring will remain near their current levels. Pork continues about a dime a pound below last year, more in line with prices a few years ago. Retail beef cuts dipped a little late last year--now are back up again. Prices will continue to average around \$1 per pound through the spring.

Count on poultry products to help out spring budgets. Eggs are abundant; prices are down and will stay low through midyear. Broilers and turkeys cost less than last spring, too.

Milk and dairy products will cost more this year. After rising early in 1971, milk prices are likely to increase more in coming months.

Cooking oil, margarine, and salad dressing prices increased early this year because of very high prices for vegetable oils, but may not change much this spring.

Spring Produce Bulletin: Cold weather has delayed and damaged fruit and vegetable crops. Recent produce prices have increased and spring crops may come in later than usual.

Lettuce and tomato supplies for spring salads could be somewhat smaller this year. Late March lettuce prices rose sharply, but they will ease down some as spring crops appear on the market. Recent cold and wind damage may affect output and prices of other early spring vegetables from Florida. Fruit supplies are pretty well set until summer crops arrive. Smaller shipments of Navel oranges held orange prices above last winter. There are plenty of grapefruit, but there is an unusual demand, so, here too, price is up and may rise a little more. Smaller apple and pear crops last fall have boosted prices on produce counters this year.

What about canned, frozen fruits and vegetables? Supplies are generally smaller than last winter, and prices average a little higher. Frozen orange juice prices have started out well below early 1970 levels. But freezes have hit the record processing-orange crop in Florida. So prices have gone up some, and will approach the higher levels of last spring.

Look for specials on cling peaches, ripe olives, canned sweet corn. And, potatoes are cheaper; the large crop last fall is keeping prices down.

Allow more for eating out if your budget includes regular outlays for bought meals. As usual, food prices at work, school restaurants, and snack bars are going up more rapidly than prices at grocery stores. The tab for away-from-home eating could average 5-6 percent higher for the year than in 1970.

USDA RESPONSE ON ENVIRONMENT

New Information Report. The U.S. Department of Agriculture works in many ways to remedy environmental problems. Department programs protect and improve the environment through research, forestry, conservation, and a wide range of rural and community services. To acquaint the public with these activities and their progress, USDA recently initiated Response: A Report on Actions for a Better Environment. The monthly, 4-page publication is available to scientists, educators, conservation and environmental writers, officers in conservation organizations, state environmental officials, naturalists, and others working directly with environmental problems. Requests to be on the mailing list for Response may be sent to: Editor of Response, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. There is no charge for the report.

U.S. DIETS VARY WITH THE SEASONS

Reason For Spring Fever? More U.S. families have "poor" diets during the spring than in any other season of the year. Findings of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 1965-66 Household Consumption Survey showed 21 percent of U.S. diets were rated "poor" during the spring months compared with the 18 percent in each of the other seasons. Diets rated "poor" generally failed to provide enough vitamin C (ascorbic acid), vitamin A, and calcium. Although these nutrients are a problem every season, shortages of the first two occur more often in the spring when consumption of fruits and vegetables is lower than in summer. Total food budgets and the division of the food dollar among food groups varied little from season to season. Thus, improvements in diets must come from shifts within food groups or in the composition of individual foods—facts important to educators and policymakers.

MUCH ADO ABOUT MULCHES

A Good Cover-up. Build a better garden with mulches. In fact, using a mulch may well be your most valuable garden practice. Mulches keep the soil moist and cool; reduce soil erosion; add organic matter to the soil; retard weed growth; and furnish food for earthworms that loosen and aerate the soil. "Mulches For Your Garden," a new USDA publication prepared by the Soil Conservation Service, says grass clippings, sawdust, straw, and compost make excellent mulches and are easy to apply. Compost is probably best. The bulletin explains how compost can be made from leftover plant materials, such as leaves, grass clippings, stems and stalks from harvested vegetables, corn husks, pea hulls, and fine twigs. Single copies of "Mulches For Your Garden" (G-185) are available free from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, or from local SCS offices located in most county seats.

"GOODEBYE, FILLED MILK ?"

Consumers Seem To Be Saying This. Fewer areas are reporting sales of filled or imitation milk (which substitute vegetable fat for milkfat to make a whole-milk-like beverage). Total sales are having a hard time, too.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Information, Washington, D.C. 20250. Please include your zipcode.